

CLAIMS:

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the steps of:

1. A method for authenticating and authorizing computer users comprising
the steps of:
 - a. storing security information for a plurality of computer users in a user profile database;
 - b. receiving at an authorization server coupled with the user profile database log-in information from a computer user who has launched a computer application;
 - c. in response to step b, creating a Session ID for the computer user with the authorization server;
 - d. storing at least a portion of the Session ID on the user's computer;
 - e. also in response to step b, creating an object associated with the computer user or the Session ID;
 - f. storing the object in a directory coupled with the authorization server;
 - g. copying at least some of the security information relating to the computer user from the user profile database to the object in the directory;
 - h. comparing the log-in information entered by the computer user to the security information for the computer user and allowing the computer user access to the launched computer application if the user is an authenticated or authorized user of the computer application; and
 - i. permitting other computer applications launched by the computer user to reference the Session ID on the user's computer so that the other computer applications may access the object for the computer user on the directory to authenticate or authorize the user for the other computer applications without requiring the user to re-enter the log-in information.
2. The method as set forth in claim 1, the security information including authentication and authorization information.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2, the authentication and authorization information including at least one of the following: user names, user IDs, passwords, public-key data, certificates, and access control information.

5 4. The method as set forth in claim 1, the Session ID being based on at least one of the following: a date on which the computer user launched the computer application; a time in which the computer user launched the computer application; a TCP/IP address of the computer user; a user name of the computer user; and an account code.

10 5. The method as set forth in claim 1, further including the steps of creating a shopping cart and storing the shopping cart along with the object in the directory.

15 6. The method as set forth in claim 5, further including the steps of allowing the user to select items to be purchased and storing information relating to the selected items in the shopping cart.

7. A system for authenticating and authorizing computer users, the system comprising:

a user profile database for storing security information for a plurality of computer users;

5 an authorization server coupled with the user profile database for receiving log-in information from a computer user who has launched a computer application, for creating a Session ID for the computer user, for storing at least a portion of the Session ID on the user's computer and for creating an object associated with the computer user or the Session ID; and

10 a directory coupled with the authorization server for storing the object created by the authorization server; and

15 the authorization server being further operable for copying at least some of the security information relating to the computer user from the user profile database to the object in the directory, comparing log information entered by the computer user to the security information for the computer user and allowing the computer user access to the launched computer application if the user is an authenticated or authorized user of the computer application, permitting other computer applications launched by the computer user to reference the Session ID on the user's computer so that the other computer applications may access the object for the computer user on the directory to authenticate or authorize the user for the other computer applications without requiring the user to re-enter the log-in information.

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30 8. The system as set forth in claim 7, the security information including authentication and authorization information.

9. The system as set forth in claim 8, the authentication and authorization information including at least one of the following: user names, user IDs, passwords, public-key data, certificates, and access control information.

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10. The system as set forth in claim 7, the Session ID being based on at least one of the following: a date on which the computer user launched the computer application; a time in which the computer user launched the computer application; a TCP/IP address of the computer user; a user name of the computer user; and an account code.

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11. The system as set forth in claim 7, the authorization server being further operable for creating a shopping cart and storing the shopping cart along with the object in the directory.

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12. The system as set forth in claim 11, the authorization server being further operable for allowing the user to select items to be purchased and storing information relating to the selected items in the shopping cart.

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